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ACTION EUR-12

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AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

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AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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TAGS: SCUL, PINT, PO

SUBJ: AFM CULTURAL DYNAMIZATION PROGRAM

REF: (A) LISBON 4827; (B) LISBON 981 (NTOAL)

SUMARY: AFM "CULTURAL DYNAMIZATION" PROGRAM TO "CLARIFY"
PURPOSES OF REVOLUTION IN RURAL AREAS VIA SMALL MILITARY TEAMS
HAS RUN INTO DIFFICULTY AND MAY BE REORGANIZED SOON. END SUMMARY.

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1. BACKGROUND - IN OCTOBER 1974, THE PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES

MOVEMENT (AFM) LAUNCHED A NATIONWIDE "CULTURAL DYNAMIZATION" AND "CIVIC CLARIFICATION" CAMPAIGN. THE PROGRAM IS DIRECTED BY THE CENTRAL DYNAMIZATION COMMISSION OF THE FIFTH DIVISION OF THE ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF IN CONJUNCTION WITH A CIVILIAN INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMISSION. ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES OF THE CAMPAIGN IS TO RAISE THE POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF RURAL DWELLERS AND TO FAMILIARIZE THEM WITH THE AFM PROGRAM. THE WIDESPREAD ASSUMPTION IN AFM IS THAT RURAL AREAS, ESPECIALLY IN THE NORTH, HAVE STILL NOT BEEN REACHED BY APRIL REVOLUTION. THIS ASSUMPTION LEADS TO THE FEAR THAT IN ELECTIONS AND OTHER WAYS THE RURAL AREAS WILL BE POTENTIAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR "COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES" UNLESS SOMETHING IS DONE TO EDUCATE THE PEOPLE. CAMPAIGN TEAMS OF SIX TO EIGHT SOLDIERS CONDUCT THE TALKING SESSIONS, SOMETIMES IN CONJUNCTION WITH MILITARY MANEUVERS IN THE AREA. ALL "CLARIFICATION" SESSIONS ARE PRECEDED BY EITHER A FILM, PLAY, OR SOME TYPE OF "CULTURAL" ENTERTAINMENT.

2. FOLLOWING ARE TWO FIRSTHAND REPORTS:

EMBOFF ATTENDED "CLARIFICATION" PROGRAM FEB 17 IN POOR AND ISOLATED VILLAGE OF BAIRRO APPROXIMATELY 40 MILES NORTH OF LISBON. "CLARIFICATION" (ESCLARECIMENTO) TEAM OF SEVEN SOLDIERS DIRECTED EVENING SESSION BEFORE ESTIMATED 170 PERSONS IN VILLAGE BARN. OTHER THAN TWO PRO-AFM POSTERS AND ONE COPY OF THE AFM PROGRAM, NO PROPAGANDA WAS DISPLAYED. SOLDIERS HANDED OUT SMALL COPIES OF POSTERS TO CROWD. EMBOFF NOTICED SEVERAL PEOPLE WITH AFM "MOVIMENTO" NEWSPAPER. FOLLOWING INTRODUCTORY FILM, TEAM TRIED TO EXPLAIN WHAT AFM IS AND NEED FOR DIALOGUE WITH PEOPLE. TEAM EXPLAINED END OF AFRICAN WARS, ABOLITION OF SECRET POLICE, DESTRUCTION OF FASCIST STRUCTURES, PROBLEMS OF INFLATION, AND LOW SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRY. AFTER SPEECH, MILITARY SPOKESMAN ASKED FOR FEEDBACK.

3. VILLAGERS RESPONDED WITH SPECIFIC, BITTER, AND HEATED COMPLAINTS FOCUSED SOLELY ON LOCAL MATTERS. SCATTERED, INADEQUATE DIVISION OF FARMLAND AND DIFFICULTY IN SECURING OR PROTECTING WATER RIGHTS WERE TWO MAJOR ISSUES. NATIONAL WINE JUNTA AND "PATRAO" (BOSS) WERE DENOUNCED TO ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE OF ENTIRE CROWD. EMBOFF NOTED COMPLAINTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEITHER FRAMED IN MARXIST TERMS NOR PEPPERED WITH WORD "FASCIST" AS HAS BEEN COMMON AFTER APRIL 25 IN URBAN AREAS. THOSE FEW VILLAGERS WHO SPOKE GAVE SPEECHES ENDING WITH QUESTIONS ALTERNATIVELY ADDRESSING CROWN AND MILITARY ON PODIUM. "CLARIFICATION" MEMBERS WERE UNPREPARED TO RESPOND TO DETAILED PROBLEMS PRESENTED AND EFFECTIVELY LOST CONTROL OVER MEETING FOR OVER ONE HOUR. TWO HOURS AFTER SESSION BEGAN, ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF CROWN WANDERED OFF.

4. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED FIRST-HAND REPORT ON TWO "CLARIFICATION" TEAMS' PART OF "OPERATION NORTADA" MILITARY MANEUVERS JAN 8-21 IN NORTH OF PORTUGAL. PARATROOPER-CLARIFICATION TEAMS A AND B WENT TO VILLAGES WHICH REPORT DESCRIBED AS ALMOST MEDIEVAL. PARATROOPERS OF BOTH TEAMS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE FOR MILITARY EXERCISE AND GAVE HELICOPTER AND PARACHUTE JUMPING SHOW AS KICKOFF TO PROGRAMS. RESIDENTS WERE THRILLED WITH HELICOPTERS AND LITTLE ELSE. TEAM "A" LEADER WAS DESCRIBED IN REPORT AS PRO-SPINOLA; TEAM "B" HEAD PEGGED AS AFM PURIST. BOTH TEAMS HAD DIFFICULTY COMMUNICATING WITH VILLAGERS WHO, ACCORDING TO REPORT, HAD NO IDEA WHAT THE TEAMS WERE TALKING ABOUT. ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION ENTIRE CROWN RAN AWAY FROM TEAM "A" SPEAKER TO WATCH NEARBY HELICOPTER. AT END OF SPEECHES, VILLAGERS DID NOT ASK QUESTIONS. BOTH TEAM DISCOURSES WERE NON-PARTISAN EXCEPT FOR STATEMENT TO COUNTERACT RUMOR THAT "COMMUNISTS EAT CHILDREN."

5. COMMENT: THERE IS SOME INDICATION THAT "CLARIFICATION" PROGRAM IS MODELED ON VILLAGE-LEVEL EFFORTS OF LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AGAINST WHICH PORTUGUESE ARMY FOUGHT IN AFRICA. IMPRESSED BY THE SUCCESS OF THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WITH THEIR PROGRAMS, THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY HAD HOPED TO CARRY OUT SIMILAR PROGRAMS IN THE HOMELAND IN ORDER TO CONVEY TO THE PEOPLE THE PROGRAM OF THE AFM.

6. ACCORDING TO SEVERAL SOURCES, EFFECTIVENESS OF "CLARIFICATION" PROGRAM IS GENERALLY POOR. IDEOLOGICAL SLANT, IF ANY, FOLLOWS POLITICAL COLORATION OF TEAM LEADER; WE HAVE RECEIVED NO REPORTS OF CONSISTENT PARTISAN PROPAGANDIZING. TEAMS APPEAR TO BE HARD WORKING AND FRUSTRATED OVER INABILITY TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY OR APPEAR RELEVANT TO LOCAL PROBLEMS.

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